RAJYA SABHA

Wednesday, the 12th March, 1997/ 21 Phalguna, 1918 (Saka)

The House met at eleven of the clock **The Vice-Chairman (Shri V. Narayanasamy)** in the chair.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Fatal Road Accidents in Delhi

*241. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of fatal road accidents in Delhi in 1996 and the percentage by which such accidents rose in 1996 as compared to 1995;

(b) the number of fatal road accidents in 1996 in comparison to 1995 caused by the private buses being operated on various routes in the City;

(c) the areas in the City identified to be accident prone made more safer in 1996 stating the steps taken in this regard; and

(d) the strategy formulated by Government to bring down the rate of fatal accidents keeping in view the ever increasing number of vehicles on Delhi roads?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) and (b) The requisite information is as under:

	1995	1996	%age decrease
Total number of fatal road accidents	1981	1953	1.41
Number of fatal road accidents by private buses	568	407	28.34

(c) and (d) The names of the accident prone areas in the National Capital Territory are given at *Annexure—I*. The steps being taken for bringing about improvement in traffic management include strict enforcement of traffic rules, upgradation of traffic signal system, construction of road dividers, speed breakers and such other features and educating the public about the road safety measures. It has also been decided to introduce Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) as a long term strategy to cope up with the rapidly increasing volume of traffic in Delhi.

Annexure

List of Areas Identified as Accident Prone Area

1. G.T. Road near Shahdara flyover.
2. G.T. Road near Shastri Park Light point.
3. Shahid Maharaja Nahar Singh Marg i.e. Road No. 37.
4. Ring Road Raja Garden Chowk to E.S.I. Hospital.
5. Najafgarh Road from Moti Nagar Chowk to Distt. Centre.
6. Rohtak Road (Punjabi Bagh chowk to Peera Gari Chowk and Nangloi Depot to Gehwra More).
7. Outer Ring Road Bharow Enclave to Peera Gari Chowk.
8. I.S.B.T. Ring Road.

9. Ring Road from Shanti Van to Monkey Bridge.
10. Old Rohtak Road.
11. Mehrauli Badar Pur Road.
12. Outer Ashram Chowk.
13. Captain Gaur Marg.
14. Maharani Bagh.
15. Nizamuddin Khatta.
16. Outer Mehrauli Gurgaon Road.
17. Outer Ring Road
18. Aurbindo Marg.
19. Ring Road.
20. National Highway No. 8.
21. National Highway No. 24.
22. Desh Bandhu Gupta Road.
23. New Rohtak Road.
24. Panchkuain Road.
25. Jawahar Lal Nehru Road.
26. Mahatma Gandhi Road

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, at the outset I would like to mention that the replies given to my question are good contrary to what we are accustomed to hearing I hope the replies that I will seek to my supplementaries will be equally useful and equally informative.

Sir, on Delhi Roads, the law of the jungle prevails. Delhi has over 27 lakh vehicles on the roads, more than the number of vehicles in Mumbai, Chennai and Calcutta. Vehicles of all types and shapes try to outrage, outsmart and outmanoeuvre one another in a mad race to reach their destination fastest. It is not that there are no rules and regulations. Unfortunately, they are not properly enforced. The result is that it is the poor pedestrians and scooterists, who are knocked down. Last year the number of casualties was about 2,000. I understand only 10 per cent of the vehicles meet the rigorous inspection requirements. The balance 90 per cent are not road-worthy till proper repairs are carried out. In a majority of these vehicles, brakes do not work properly. The general complaint is that the authorities take a lenient view as many inspectors are recipients of what is called "*hafta* payments".

In foreign countries, modern instruments are used by police personnel positioning themselves at....

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Kindly put your question.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Yes, Sir. I am going to put my question.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): The Minister will answer that. You kindly put your question in brief.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Unless I give a preamble, the Minister will not be able to reply.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): The preamble should be very small. It should not be very long.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: It is very small, Sir.

In foreign countries, modern instruments are used by police personnel positioning themselves at strategic points to check the speed of cars and other vehicles. Erring drivers are stopped by the police personnel and fined on the spot.

My question is:

(a) Has the Government thought of introducing any system of checking the speed of vehicles and on the spot fines as is prevalent in foreign countries?

(b) Has the Government considered making over-speeding a serious offence and to suspend the driving licence of the erring drivers for contravening the traffic rules a second time?

(c) What steps do the Government propose to take to stop "*Hafta* Payments" prevailing among the staff?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, Mr. Birla has obviously been studying very

carefully the traffic hazards and problems in Delhi, which are a matter of concern for everybody. These things can only be improved and these violations of traffic rules, regulations etc. can only be checked by a constant drive, which, I believe, is being carried out, particularly for the last one-and-a-half years by the Delhi traffic police. I can give figures also of the large number of vehicles which have been impounded of the drivers licences which have been cancelled, of the permits of vehicles which have been withdrawn, especially of the blue-line and red-line buses. This is having some progressive effect, because the percentage of these fatal accidents is coming down. There is no doubt about it, but still it is far too high. As far as his comparison of our country with foreign countries is concerned, well, there is no problem except the financial problem. Even in regard to the manpower involved, the number of constables or traffic policemen per 10,000 vehicles in Delhi is much lower than what it is either in Mumbai or Chennai or Calcutta. There is a need for recruiting a large number of additional traffic staff. But I am informed by the police authorities that they have been pressing for the required financial assistance for a long time. It takes a long time for the sanction to come. Ultimately, they got sanction last year which enabled them to recruit an extra 600 odd people. This is absolutely inadequate. This is one thing.

The other thing is about checking of excessively speeding vehicles. Checks are being carried out particularly on the ring road at night. This is a past time which is found to be indulged in by many vehicles. They have set up special check-posts for checking these things and punishing the people responsible for it.

I have got a lot of figures and statistics, but I don't want to try the patience of the House because it won't really get us any where. Ultimately, the point is that a city like this which has now a population of more than 10 million must have some kind of a modern rapid transport system, transit system. We can see this type of system in Mumbai. In Calcutta we have even got a metro railway system. There are suburban trains, electric trains. But here there is nothing. They have informed me that the scheme which they have prepared would take at least ten years to complete. So, without that kind of a system in a congested city like this, it is very difficult to control these things except gradually by taking certain measures which are being taken.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, the reply given by the Minister is good. My second question is (a) Is it possible to have separate bicycle tracks to improve the traffic situation?; (b) Will the Government consider redesigning the pavements for greater pedestrian safety? and (c) Will the Government plan more flyovers?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, these are very useful suggestions which I will communicate to the people in charge of traffic regulations. Of course, the provision for separate bicycle tracks depends on the road area which is available. As far as pedestrians are concerned, unfortunately without casting any reflection on anybody, I have to point out that there is very little pedestrian discipline in our country. They cross the road wherever they like, whenever they like. Nobody observes any precautions or anything. This is partly also responsible for the fatal casualties caused by speeding vehicles.

As far as improvement of footpaths and pavements is concerned, this is a very valid point. I will see what can be done about it.

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, there are two or three issues which are of very recent origin. One is because of the introduction of the Blueline and the Redline buses. They go at a high speed because they want to collect more passengers. I would like to

know from the Minister what restrictions have been put on them to operate at normal speed.

Another point is, there was a suggestion that the transport activity should be handed over to the State Government, because it is not really a law and order problem. If that suggestion was made, what is the response of the Government to that proposal? And I would like to ask about the MRTS. It is an old idea. Has anything been done by the Minister to invite the people to be affected by the MRTS and to get coordination in the whole idea? Has something been done by the Minister?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Sir, as far as the suggestion goes for handing over the responsibility of traffic regulation to the State Government, I have only to say that the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi who has taken over recently has constituted a task force for traffic management to examine traffic-related problems and to work out solutions to the same. This task force is headed by the Lieutenant Governor himself and the first meeting has been held and we are waiting to see whether some workable solutions can be evolved by them. As far as blueline and redline buses are concerned, very drastic action is being taken against those drivers who are using these blueline and redline buses and violating the speed restrictions. In 1995, 1996 and 1997—up to 28th February this year—nearly 8,000 of these blueline and redline buses were impounded. The number of drivers arrested was 3,815 and prosecution was launched in 2,54,513 cases against them; and a compounding fee of over Rs. 20 lakhs was imposed on them. This way, it has come down. Since we started taking drastic action against the reckless drivers, the number of accidents caused by them has definitely started coming down.

PROF. RAM KAPSE: Has something been done as for the MRTS?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: As I told you in the earlier part of my reply, the MRTS is very much there under planning. But as I said, it will take 10 years to complete.

श्री एस०एस० सुरजेवालाः उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहूंगा कि ऐक्सीडैंट्स का जो मेजर कॉज़ दिल्ली में और कहीं भी है, वह एक तो लेन ड्राइविंग है जिसको कोई आब्जर्व नहीं करता है। एक तो लेन्स प्रॉपर नहीं है और दूसरा कोई उसको आब्जर्व नहीं करता है। दूसरा मेजर कारण यह है कि जो स्कूटरिस्ट और साइकलिस्ट है, वह पूरी सड़क के ऊपर एक्रोबैट और डांस करते चलते हैं, उनके लिए कोई लेन नहीं है, कोई प्रैक्टाइब जगह नहीं है। अगर कोई गाड़ी फास्ट आ रही है तो साइकिल वाला इधर हो जाएगा, कोई उधर चला जाएगा इसलिए क्या आप इन दोनों बातों को ध्यान में रखेंगे ? दूसरा, ईल्ड करने का कोई यहां पर सिस्टम नहीं है। पहले कौन-सी गाड़ी चौंक पर जाएगी, कौन ईल्ड करेगा, कौन रास्ता देगा, कौन पहले जाएगा- इसका कोई सिस्टम नहीं है। तो इन दोनों कारणों से भी ज्यादा ऐक्सीडैंट होते हैं। क्या मंत्री महोदय दिल्ली में स्कूटरिस्ट, मोटर साइकलिस्ट और साइकिलों के लिए कोई अलहदा लेन निर्धारित करेंगे, उनके लिए कोई सैपरेट ट्रैक बनाएंगे? इस बारे में आप क्या विचार कर रहे हैं इसके अतिरिक्त बिरला जी ने सवाल पूछा था कि आपकी स्ट्रैटजी क्या है, इन ऐक्सीडैंट्स को चैक करने के लिए और ट्रैफिक को चैक करने के लिए? आपने स्ट्रैटजी तो कोई नहीं बताई। आपने कहा कि फ्लां-फ्लां स्टैप्स ले रहे हैं। तो क्या आपने कोई स्ट्रैटजी बनाई है जिससे आप दिल्ली में ऐक्सीडैंट्स को पूरी तरह कंट्रोल कर सकें? यही दो बातें मैं आपसे जानना चाहता हूं।

श्री इन्द्रजीत गुप्तः आनरेबल मैम्बर का मैं बहुत आभारी हूंगा अगर- बहुत ज्ञान उनको है, ऐसा मालूम होता है वह भी कुछ सुझाव बताएं कि क्या स्ट्रैटजी होनी चाहिए?

श्री सैयद सिब्ते रज़ीः वह सरकार बनाएंगे तो वह भी बताएंगे।

श्री इन्द्रजीत गुप्तः यह जो मास रैपिड ट्रांसपोर्ट सिस्टम बनाने का सवाल है, यह भी स्ट्रैजी का मामला है लेकिन मैंने आपको बताया है कि धनराशि की कमी के कारण और दूसरे कारणों से, ब्यूरोक्रैटिक डिले की वजह से 10 साल के पहले यह काम कम्पलीट होने वाला नहीं है।

This is the estimate of the authorities.

मेनली उसके ऊपर डिपैंड करता है। The total number of vehicles has gone up from 3.12 lakhs in 1976 to 26.82 lakhs in 1996, that is, during the last twenty years. This number is more than the combined number of vehicles in the cities of Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai. If we combine the total number of vehicles available in these three cities, the grand total would be less than what is there in the city of Delhi. The extent of roads or the mileage of roads has not gone up proportionately at all. According to a study conducted by the Indian Roads Congress, the optimum capacity of a three-lane road is 4,000 vehicles per hour. It should not carry more than 4,500 vehicles per hour. In Delhi, this figure has gone up in some places, to 15,680 vehicles. So, there is a very, very serious problem of congestion. I agree with the hon. Member that some more thought must be given to this question of strategy and adequate funds must be made available to enable us to carry it out as soon as possible.

श्री एस०एस० सुरजेवाला: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने साइकिलिस्ट और मोटरसाइकलिस्ट के बारे में पूछा था कि इनके लिए सैप्रेट ट्रैक प्रोवाइड करने के लिए आपकी स्ट्रैटजी में, प्रोग्राम में कोई योजना है? अगर है तो उसको कब लागू करेंगे? हम से कम मौजूदा सड़कों पर उनके लिए राइट में चलने के लिए कोई जगह निर्धारित कर सकते हैं। क्या आपने कोई ऐसा स्टैप्स लिया है?.....**(व्यवधान)**.....इस बात का जवाब मंत्री जी ने नहीं दिया है।

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): The Minister has answered that point.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: I differ from the hon. Minister that the accidents have declined because fatalities have declined. If you take fatalities into consideration, the accidents might have declined. But there are a large number of accidents where fatalities have not occurred, but serious injuries have been there. If you take that into consideration, then it is not true to say that accidents have declined in Delhi. Anyway, according to my knowledge, there are accidents because licences can be procured with money. Untrained people are getting licences because they give money and get licences. Secondly, there are a large number of unregistered vehicles in Delhi. I can relate my own experience. One of my friends died in an accident. It was found out that the lorry responsible for the accident was not registered at all. There are a large number of unregistered vehicles. Thirdly, people believe that they can get away with everything in Delhi if they can pay money to the policemen.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: That is an all-India feature.

SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: That is an all-India feature. There is no doubt about it. But in Delhi, it is terribly rising. This is the problem which the Government has inherited. I don't blame the hon. Home Minister for this malady. This is an inherited problem. *(Interruptions)* I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will take steps to see that the traffic rules are strictly enforced by a little less corrupt policemen in Delhi. Secondly, he will see to it that licences are not procured without proper training and unregistered vehicles do not ply in Delhi.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: Yes, Sir. Steps will be taken, steps are being taken. But a little less corruption, as Mr. Gupta said, would help us enormously, not only in traffic regulation but also in many walks of life. This is a common disease unfortunately, which is inflicting our society. Secondly, Sir, it is true that licences are got by paying money. This phenomenon also is not peculiar to Delhi. Licences are procured by people who are not qualified to handle vehicles on payment of money. I have been informed that these truck drivers, lorry drivers, even if their licences are impounded or taken away, they gladly give them away. They do not mind giving

away their licences because, after a little while, they get another licence from some other source and continue to drive those vehicles. So, there is a great deal of corruption. There is no doubt about it. To some extent, of course, without the complicity of some sections of the police force, this is not possible. Obviously, there is some collusion also and, therefore, we must take more resolute measures to stamp this out.

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, apart from corruption,—I also wanted to take it up but that has already been taken up by the hon. Member—I would like to make another point about granting a licence. Once a licence is granted, it is granted for life, and I have seen that many taxi drivers and many auto-drivers who are more than 65 or 75 years old and who are not able to have any vision or who are not able to hear, continue to drive the vehicles. I would like to know from the Government whether it will again examine to see that they are fit for driving a vehicle after a certain age, most probably after 60 years, or whether the Government will stipulate a certain age condition for driving. This is one point I would like to know.

The next point is about speed. In Delhi, I find that sometimes the speed is so enormous that the people who travel, are extremely afraid of travelling in vehicles. I want to know whether speed checks will also be installed on the roads so that persons who drive the vehicles at an enormous speed are suitably punished.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Okay. Your suggestions have been taken care of by the hon. Minister. Q. No. 224. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, the Minister has to reply to those points.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): You have given the suggestion. The Minister will consider that. ...*(Interruptions)*... Mr. Minister, would you like to react?

SHRI G. SWAMINATHAN: Sir, I have asked him a specific question. ...*(Interruptions)*...

DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: You can avoid a lot of accidents on the main roads...*(Interruptions)*...

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): Kindly sit down. You can write to the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*... Kindly sit down. You can write to the Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...Mr. Singla, kindly take your seat. ...*(Interruptions)*... He is going to answer that. ...*(Interruptions)*... Kindly take your seats.

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: The Vice-Chairman is quite correct. I have got implicit suggestions in your questions. Only the people who are fit to drive a vehicle and who do not have any physical handicaps should be allowed. That would rigorously be enforced. People who are physically handicapped would not be allowed to take licences. Of course, that has to be done. I am not aware of how many people are there like this. I also have a friend in Delhi whose daughter was killed. She was going in an autorickshaw, and later, it was found that the driver had no legs. He was minus both his legs. He had lost his legs in an operation or something like that. He had no licence, but he was driving the autorickshaw without legs and could not control the vehicle. Anyway, I do not want to go into the details. Anyway, this young lady who had a small child, was killed and nothing happened to the driver because he could not be caught. He disappeared. This kind of dreadful things are also happening.

SHRI SATISH AGARWAL: He disappeared without legs!

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: You see....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Is that possible?

SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA: She was still alive. She was taken to a hospital.

The driver was also injured. He was also taken to the same hospital. ...*(Interruptions)*... And from the hospital, sometime in the night, he quietly slipped away and disappeared. This is the kind of arrangement we have in our Capital city!

And the second question that you asked was about speed checks. Speed checks are taking place now. They have been installed at several places and we hope that this will become more effective.

डाक व्यवस्था का आधुनिकीकरण किया जाना

*242. **श्री गोविन्दराम मिरीः***
श्री शिव चरण सिंहः

क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे किः

(क) क्या सरकार डाक व्यवस्था में व्याप्त कुप्रबंध को दूर करने के उद्देश्य से उसका आधुनिकीकरण करने पर विचार कर रही है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो तत्संबंधी ब्यौरा क्या है; और

(ग) इस संबंध में क्या कदम उठाये गये हैं?

विधि और न्याय मंत्रालय के राज्य मंत्री (श्री रमाकांत डी० खलप): (क) से (ग) एक विवरण सभा पटल रखा गया है।

विवरण

टैक्नालॉजी का समावेश करके डाक प्रणाली को आधुनिक बनाना डाक विभाग की आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना के उद्देश्यों में से एक उद्देश्य है। यह उद्देश्य काउंटर सेवाओं पर विशेष जोर देते हुए विभिन्न कार्य-क्षेत्रों में कम्प्यूटर पर आधारित टैक्नालॉजी की शुरूआत करके प्राप्त किया जा रहा है।

डाक सेवाओं के आधुनिकीकरण के कार्यक्रमों का उद्देश्य निम्नलिखित प्रदान करना है:

(क) ग्राहकों के लिए अधिक कार्यकुशल तथा उत्तरदायी काउंटर सेवाएं;

(ख) आइडेंटीफाइड कस्टमर ग्रुपों की आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति के लिए नई मूल्यवर्धित सेवाएं; और

(ग) कर्मचारियों के मनोबल को बढ़ाने तथा कार्य की बोझिलता समाप्त करने के लिए काम और काम की परिस्थितियों के बेहतर अध्ययन से कार्यकुशलता बढ़ाने के साथ-साथ आधुनिक तथा स्वच्छ कार्य वातावरण।

इस प्रयोजन के लिए तैयार किए गए मशीनीकरण व आधुनिकीकरण के विशिष्ट कार्यक्रम इस प्रकार हैं:—

— कम्प्यूटर पर आधारित बहुउद्देशीय काउंटर मशीनों की शुरूआत।

— महत्वपूर्ण बड़े केन्द्रों में मेल प्रोसेसिंग को ऑटोमेटिक बनाना।

— मनीआर्डर शीघ्र भेजने तथा अन्य मूल्यवर्धित सेवाओं की व्यवस्था करने के लिए वैरी स्माल अपरचर टर्मिनल्स (वी०एस०ए०टी०) नेटवर्क की स्थापना।

— बचत बैंक, डाक जीवन बीमा (पी०एल०आई०) और स्पीड पोस्ट आपरेशन्स के लिए कम्प्यूटरों का प्रयोग।

— कार्य के वातावरण को बेहतर बना कर तथा ग्राहकों को दी जाने वाली सुविधाओं में सुधार करके काउंटर सेवाओं और फ्रंट ऑफिस का आधुनिकीकरण।

— काम करने की प्रक्रिया में तेजी लाने और काम की बोझिलता को समाप्त करने के लिए अधिक महत्वपूर्ण डाकघरों में उन्नत ऑपरेशनल इक्विपमेंट प्रदान करना।

मशीनीकरण और आधुनिकीकरण की स्कीमों में जिस सीमा तक लक्ष्य प्राप्त किया गया, इस प्रयोजन हेतु आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना में मुहैया कराया गया योजना परिव्यय तथा 31 मार्च, 1996 तक इस्तेमाल की गई धनराशि का विवरण क्रमशः अनुबंध-I, अनुबंध-II, अनुबंध-III, में दिया गया है। वर्ष 1996-97 के दौरान, जो आठवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना का अंतिम वर्ष है, आधुनिकीकरण के ये कार्यक्रम जारी रखे गए हैं।